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The unrealised value of global workers: the need for global talent management

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Abstract

Global workers play a critical role in multinational organisations which transcend national boundaries as part of their business routines. In this chapter, we highlight the pivotal positions that many global workers play. Specifically, we unpack the role of global workers as key boundary spanners, navigating relational, knowledge, and cultural boundaries across the organisation. The chapter also argues that the full value of global workers remains unrealised given the lack of planning and integration of these workers in terms of knowledge management processes, talent management strategies, and global mobility functions. Specifically, we point to the lack of strategic and practical oversights from corporate HR functions and how this may be impacting upon both global workers' experiences and organisational efforts to maximise value.

Key words

Global Workers, Knowledge, Talent, Value, Expatriation

Introduction

Global work is an essential feature in many multinational enterprises (MNEs), providing a mechanism to coordinate business activities globally and use resources more strategically (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). Research has recognised the importance of advancing our understanding around global work experiences and organisational efforts to manage such work (Reiche, Lee, & Allen, 2019) and to better align global talent management strategies and knowledge management processes with this type of work (Harzing, Pudelko, & Reiche, 2016). The benefits derived from global work range from being able to expand business operations to more strategic use of resources and greater access to specialised talent (Reiche et al., 2019). The type of benefits that may be derived and the challenges involved however are likely to vary depending on the type of global work arrangements being used. Much of the literature has focused on traditional forms of global work such as long-term or traditional expatriates or, in more recent times, self-initiated expatriates (Kraimer, Bolino, & Mead, 2016). In this chapter we focus more on a broader suite of global work arrangements that in broad terms encompass all situations where employees collaborate with each other in a culturally diverse context and who are also often geographically distant from one another (Hinds, Liu, & Lyon, 2011).

Global talent management considers the attraction, selection, development, and retention of high-performing employees in pivotal roles globally (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019). In this chapter, we take the perspective that a substantial cadre of global workers are in pivotal roles within MNEs due to the wide strategic boundary spanning activities they undertake amongst a multiplicity of actors and business units. They play critical business roles in terms of control and coordination along with being key recipients and/or purveyors of knowledge. Given that knowledge is increasingly seen as a critical organisational asset, its effective management can be viewed as business critical (Kiessling & Harvey, 2006). The most valuable knowledge is often embedded within people's experiences and thus formalising and sharing it can be a challenge (Whelan & Carcary, 2011). The

nature of global workers roles means that there is much scope for them to gain considerable knowledge across the boundaries that they traverse. How these workers are managed therefore takes on prominence if organisations are going to realise benefits. Moreover, they possess substantial autonomy over their roles which provides opportunity for significant variability in performance, and as a result, contribution to organisational objectives and success (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Therefore, they represent a particular type of talent within MNEs.

In this chapter, we first define global work arrangements, provide an overview of the various forms of global workers, and conceptualise global talent management with a focus on pivotal positions around these arrangements. Second, we unpack the global workers' role as key boundary spanners in organisations. We show how various forms of global workers create value for MNEs through their boundary spanning activity, particularly in relation to knowledge management. Third, we depict the tensions faced by these individuals, along with the management of such global workers, highlighting a mismatch in demands and resources and a lack of oversight from corporate HR functions.

Global Work Arrangements

Global work arrangements encompass a range of individuals where international working is a key feature of roles including traditional expatriates, short-term assignees, flexpatriates, international business travellers (IBTs), rotational assignees, international commuters, global domestics, and global virtual workers (see e.g., Jooss, McDonnell, & Conroy, 2021a; Reiche et al., 2019; Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen, & Bolino, 2012). These forms of global work can be distinguished based on their purpose, duration, location, compensation, the extent of corporate HR involvement, and the associated advantages and drawbacks, among others. For example, traditional expatriates are individuals who relocate for a period of 12 months or more to one destination, often being accompanied by their

family and receiving an expatriate package with a range of benefits. For these global workers, HR and mobility functions are involved in managing the international assignment (i.e., preparation, support, repatriation). In contrast, significantly less HR involvement and oversight is found when managing shorter or more flexible forms of global work such as international business travel, flexpatriation, and short-term assignees (see Jooss et al., 2021a).

IBTs are individuals 'for whom business travel is an essential component of their work' (Welch & Worm, 2006: 284 cited in Collings, Scullion, & Morley, 2007: 206). This generally ranges from a few days to up to three weeks of international travel. IBTs do not relocate to the various countries that they visit and maintain their home country responsibilities during their short stay abroad. Flexpatriates are individuals 'who travel for brief assignments, away from their home base and across cultural or national borders, leaving their family and personal life behind' (Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl, & Kollinger, 2004: 1371). While traditional expatriates generally just relocate to one country, flexpatriates are assigned to multiple and potentially highly diverse countries which requires adaptability in their working approach. International commuters are individuals who commute 'from a home country to a place of work in another country, usually on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, while the family remains at home' (Mayerhofer et al., 2004: 1375). Rotational assignees operate internationally on a shift cycle (Shortland, 2018). An intensive period of work abroad, often in hardship and offshore locations, is followed by a time off period back in the home country (Collings et al., 2007). Short-term international assignees are assigned to one or a small number of countries for up to one year (Shaffer et al., 2012). In this case, generally, the family does not relocate, and compensation remains the home country responsibility.

Global domestics are individuals who have key responsibilities at a more regional or global level that entail interactions with others from a range of countries. However, in their role, they are not required to physically move but remain in the home country (Shaffer et al., 2012). Finally, in recent

years, and accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, global virtual work has become fundamental to how firms coordinate and collaborate internationally (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020). Global virtual workers do not interact in person but through technology-mediated means (Hinds, Liu, & Lyon, 2012). When the pandemic hit, and as countries implemented various restrictions around travel, MNEs have had to eradicate or reduce most of their other forms of global work which they predominantly had relied on pre-COVID. Instead, MNEs tried to imitate 'spaces of collocation' and face-to-face interaction for global workers across country borders through virtual means (Faulconbridge, Jones, Anable, & Marsden, 2020; Reiche et al., 2019). Many individuals had to conduct the global nature of their roles, for the first time, in a fully virtual context (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). While not every one of the aforementioned work arrangements entail individuals performing positions of a business critical or pivotal nature, we argue that many are. Either way, in line with the different perspectives and approaches of talent management in existence, we argue that these global workers deserve further attention when talking about talent and the value that they may bring to an organisation. Moreover, the portfolio of options for global working provides opportunities to individuals to gain international experience which has long been argued as being critical to those harbouring ambitions to join top management teams (Lublin, 1996). A key challenge is that we have little understanding on the sheer scale of the utilisation of such different forms of global workers given many of these forms tend to fall outside organisational reporting and support systems except for long-term international assignees (Suutari, Brewster, Riuisala, & Syrjäkari, 2013).

Global Talent Management: Global Workers and Pivotal Positions

We conceptualise global talent management as talent management at a global scale. While there is no set agreement on the meaning or conceptualisation of talent management, four approaches are

commonly depicted (Collings & Mellahi, 2009): a people approach, practices approach, strategic talent pool approach, pivotal positions approach. We briefly outline each now.

First, the people approach refers to talent management as a categorisation of people. Here, the focus tends to be on individuals that have competencies that are hard to find or difficult to replace and associated concepts are a portfolio of people with differentiating investments, a performance-potential matrix, and a focus on intellectual skills as part of the knowledge economy (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). The people approach is also closely related to the categorisation of employees into A, B, and C players where the most investment is into A players, a small number of elite employees, and where poor performers are slowly exited from the organisation. This approach further discusses innate versus developmental skills and while some authors see the differentiated investment as a core focus, others have centred on the debate between inclusive and exclusive approaches to talent. As part of the latter, inclusive approaches consider talent management for all employees while exclusive approaches focus on a subset of the employee population (Dries, 2013).

Second, the practices approach considers talent management as the presence of key practices. This approach acknowledges the importance of well-crafted practices encompassing a set of activities, programmes, processes, and systems (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014). For example, recruiting and selecting talent requires an analysis of the labour market, benchmarking exercises, and employer branding. Once talent has joined a company, onboarding, development, performance and rewards practices must be in place to retain these employees. In addition, processes to identify and develop key internal talent must be established including succession planning, talent reviews, career management, and internal mobility (Sparrow & Makram, 2015).

Third, the strategic pools approach centres around human capital as a collective. Talent pools are ultimately a grouping or clustering of talent (either people or positions) and the focus lies on those wider labour pools that promise significant impact upon investment and improvement of

organisational capabilities and performance (Boudreau & Ramstadt, 2007) As a central aspect of this approach, strategic workforce planning strongly considers business strategy and talent strategy alignment, translation of organisational capabilities needs into talent needs, and targeting of specific cohorts of centrality (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Related to this approach is the question of value of human capital considering both impact on organisational performance and feasibility of executive strategic plans, as well as risk optimisation and management (Cascio & Boudreau, 2012).

Finally, the positions approach focuses on the identification of pivotal positions. As a response to the critique by Pfeffer (2001) on the locus of value creation, this approach centres on positions rather than people in the first instance. Instead of segmenting the workforce by A, B, and C players, Huselid, Beatty, and Becker (2005) refer to A, B, and C positions; A positions being those that have a direct strategic impact and exhibit high performance variability among those in the position, representing upside potential. These A positions are also characterised by high autonomous decision-making, performance being the primary determinant of compensation, and creating value by substantially enhancing revenue. Given their scope of responsibility, consequences of mistakes may be very costly but missed revenue opportunities are an even greater loss for the organisation (Huselid et al., 2005). These pivotal positions are ultimately defined by their centrality to organisational strategy in combination with the extent to which a change in the quality or quantity of people in these positions generates significant outcomes (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2007; Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Notably, this not only considers planning around present pivotal positions but also those positions that may become pivotal in the future, highlighting the dynamic nature required under this approach (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). Once these pivotal positions are identified, organisations ought to invest disproportionately in those positions and ensure they are staffed with the best people because it is these positions which offer the greatest return of potential at an organisational level (Huselid & Becker, 2011).

While without uniform agreement, the positions approach has gained considerable traction in the literature (McDonnell & Wiblen, 2021). For this chapter, we adopt this positions approach, whilst acknowledging that a combination of the above approaches is likely to exist in some organisations. We continue with making the argument that global workers are likely to have a considerable strategic impact through their wide boundary spanning activities central to many of their positions within the MNE.

Global Workers as Key Boundary Spanners

Global work scholars have yet to fully adopt a boundary spanning perspective. Research on boundary spanning traditionally explores how organisations innovate more effectively by navigating the boundaries that exist, and adapting to the frictions these create, with the external environment (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Boundaries are evident within and between organisations and are characterised by differences, novelty, ambiguity, and complexity (Carlile, 2002). Studies consider boundary spanning from a variety of perspectives such as boundary spanning roles, motivations, behaviours, and activities that individuals perform (Birkinshaw, Ambos, & Bouquet, 2017; Minbaeva & Santangelo, 2018). More recently, scholars have begun to look at global boundary spanning, particularly in the context of MNEs that coordinate and orchestrate knowledge flows within globally distributed workforces. Global boundary spanning is defined as a 'set of communication and coordination activities performed by individuals within an organization and between organizations to integrate activities across multiple cultural, institutional and organizational contexts' (Schotter et al. 2017: 404).

For global workers in an MNE context, emphasis is given to understanding how boundaries disrupt the flow of knowledge, development of relationships, and bridging of cultural differences (Conroy, McDonnell, & Jooss, 2020). A major criticism of this perspective is it often fails to identify the parameters of who may be classified as a boundary spanner, with seemingly any individual, role,

or activity considered a boundary spanning concern. As Schotter et al. (2017) suggest, although 'individual actors play an important role in the effectiveness of boundary spanning…not every individual may be equally effective in this role' (2017: 413). We argue that boundary spanning offers a useful theoretical base to conceptualise the pivotal positions, behaviours, and activities of global workers, but assert that the nature and scope of their role impacts how effective a global worker is at navigating cross-border interfaces. This also brings the relevance of global approaches to talent management to mind. Another related criticism involves identifying exactly what boundaries are being traversed as global boundaries which should be classified by varying degrees of novelty, uncertainty, and foreignness (Mäkelä et al., 2019). We suggest that global workers are exposed to various intra-firm boundaries in MNEs such as unit boundaries between HQ and subsidiaries, functional boundaries between departments, or hierarchical boundaries between management layers. Inter-firm boundaries also exist where global workers interact and exchange knowledge while building social capital with global and local organisations. Exploring how global workers coordinate knowledge flows across these boundaries may advance our understanding of their pivotal positions.

The various types of global workers in MNEs such as traditional expatriates, inpatriates, third country nationals, IBTs, and virtual workers, to name a few, all potentially confront a myriad of cross-national boundaries and, in doing so, may enact various boundary spanning positions and activities. Most scholars underestimate that, given the broad scope and comprehensive nature of their responsibilities, global workers are most at risk of conflicting circumstances across diverse multiple boundaries. This also means that there is likely to be much variation in the performance of individuals performing such roles which, in turn, impacts on the value conferred on the organisation.

Research on traditional expatriates suggests that they fulfil important boundary spanning positions by transferring HQ-specific knowledge to local subsidiaries that may be crucial for managing boundary interfaces and overcoming liabilities of foreignness in external environments (Harzing,

2021). Boundary spanning activities of expatriates may be particularly important in peripheral locations when knowledge is imprisoned in local networks and not easily extracted or intelligible (Furusawa & Brewster, 2019). Traditional expatriates may act as corporate ambassadors in informing and updating HQ on important changes in the local subsidiary, which offsets the degree of bounded rationality for corporate executives in managing across global boundaries. These are also important figureheads in building relational ties across organisational boundaries with external stakeholders in the local context and engaging in multi-faceted boundary spanning activities the longer they stay in the local subsidiary (Au & Fukuda, 2002). Johnson and Duxbury (2010) argue that expatriates coordinate in such a way that opens the boundary to enable cross boundary knowledge flows while also guarding or closing the boundary to protect of buffer from any potentially harmful interferences externally. Other boundary spanning activities of these expatriates may include shaping the agendas of external agents, gathering local intelligence, signaling corporate commitment and improving the subsidiary's legitimacy or reputation locally (Johnson & Duxbury, 2010). The main body of research on global workers focuses on traditional expatriates and how they can be supported in adjusting to managing across cultural boundaries. Applying a boundary spanning lens, Liu and Meyer (2020) looked at how expatriates facilitate reverse knowledge transfer in the context of international acquisitions for Chinese MNEs as well as the significance of collaborative-team based HRM practices in motivating increased boundary spanning behaviour.

In addition to expatriates, inpatriates also occupy pivotal boundary spanning positions when they undertake international assignments from the local subsidiary to the home country of the HQ (Collings, McDonnell, Gunnigle & Lavelle, 2010). Although receiving less attention as critical linking agents across home-host country boundaries, inpatriates are deployed in crucial boundary spanning positions as both senders of subsidiary-specific knowledge to the HQ through reverse knowledge transfer and receivers of corporate knowledge that is distributed to the local subsidiary upon

repatriation (Harzing et al., 2016). Inpatriates reach across the intra-firm boundaries in the MNE and seek to build social capital with corporate decision makers, usually with a view to furthering their career or influencing decisions for the benefit of the local subsidiary (Harvey, Novicevic, & Speier, 2000; Sarabi, Froese, & Hamori, 2017). Reiche (2011) is one of the few to explore the boundary spanning role of inpatriates and argues that they are important knowledge carriers that may enhance the absorptive capacity of HQ. Harvey's research has also been to the fore on inpatriates looking at how this process leads to broadening of the cultural diversity of HQ top management teams, particularly in US MNEs (Harvey & Buckley, 1997). Mentoring of inpatriates by HQ staff can improve their assimilation into the corporate ranks as outsiders increase the transfer of reverse knowledge (Harvey et al., 2005) while improving trust and firm-specific learning during and retention after the assignment (Reiche, Kraimer, & Harzing, 2011). Yet, despite the challenges that inpatriates face in managing across the intra-firm boundary between the HQ and the subsidiary, there is limited research that explores the HR practices in place to support their boundary spanning activities. We also know very little about the boundary spanning positions of inpatriates in terms of managing inter-organisational boundaries in interfacing with external stakeholders in the HQ's home country context. Given their relocation status situates them in a given host country context (expatriates stationed at the subsidiary and inpatriates seconded to HQ), it could be argue that both expatriates and inpatriates confront rather static boundaries in a home-host setting. Moreover, there is also the case of third country nationals which have also received limited attention in this domain but which can perform key boundary spanning roles (notable exception being Barmeyer, Stein, & Eberhardt, 2020).

Global workers that engage in extensive travel across the MNE, without ever fully relocating, are likely to confront a multiplex of boundaries as they traverse a diversified network of subsidiaries. As such those global workers classified as IBTs also occupy pivotal boundary spanning positions but the boundary activities they engage in are much more transient and fleeting. Unlike traditional

expatriates, parent country nationals and inpatriates who are rooted a single location, IBTs are confronted with greater spatial and temporal diversity in navigating a broad range of boundaries. For instance, IBTs spend only a limited amount of time in any given market meaning they are under pressure to continuously build relationships and exchange knowledge across different boundaries (Bozkurt & Mohr, 2011). It could be argued that an important boundary spanning activity of IBTs may be the recombination of globally dispersed and discrete pockets of knowledge (Hovhannisyan & Keller, 2015). Recombination involves the melding or synthesis of two or more previously isolated yet complementary bundles of knowledge in a way that produces value across the MNE (Lee, Narula, & Hillemann, 2021). As IBTs are one of the few global workers that travel to a wide variety of locations, they have the potential to identify and connect disparate knowledge pockets leading to the creation of valuable knowledge bundles. IBTs may operate in central bridging positions between parent country expatriates and inpatriates, collecting and carrying large amounts of explicit knowledge but also translating and transferring more complex tacit knowledge between diverse units (Duvivier, Peeters, & Harzing, 2019). However, in order to become more effective in their boundary spanning positions, IBTs will likely need to engage in increased levels of travel, yet this creates physical and psychological pressures for these global workers. Although there are increasing numbers of studies that consider the perils of international business travel (Jooss et al., 2021b), scholars have yet to fully appreciate the unique boundary spanning activities that these global workers engage in as well as how they are supported in this process.

There is no doubt that due to COVID-19 more global workers will engage in less relocation-based assignments as well as pared back global travel schedules due to realisation that a lot of global work can be conducted virtually (PwC, 2020). Global virtual work is however not without boundary considerations and sharing rich tacit knowledge across a technology-mediated context is often more difficult due to a lack of visual and sensory cues that create the structure of social capital development

(Nurmi & Hinds, 2020). Although facing greater geographical and physical distance in a virtual setting, global workers can still establish perceived proximity or feelings of closeness by increasing frequency, depth, and interactivity of communication (Wilson, Boyer O'Leary, Metiu, & Jett, 2008). The reality is that most global workers managing across virtual boundaries will be operating as a part of a globally distributed team. Global work is no longer performed independently or sequentially, or indeed in a purely face-to-face context, but requires interdependent and coordinated action and the development of routines that are both corporeally and virtually embedded across the MNE (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Much of the work from Marrone (2010) on team boundary spanning as well as studies on global virtual teams (Jimenez, Boehe, Taras, & Caprar, 2017) can and should be applied to extend our understanding of global workers and their boundary spanning positions.

Despite the above considerations on how various global workers perform important linking roles within, across, and outside MNE boundaries as part of these critical roles, there is limited evidence on how the challenges these individuals confront are managed and supported, particularly in the case of all forms other than traditional expatriates. Next, we explore the challenges or tensions involved in the management of such global talent.

Tensions in Managing Global Workers

While the literature has highlighted several positive individual impacts for global workers such as exposure to new cultures and destinations, personal growth and development, and career advancement (Dimitrova, 2020), global work is characterised by a high level of complexity and therefore accompanied by multiple demands. Cultural, linguistic, spatial, and temporal distances make the coordination of work but also the management of these people a challenging task (Edwards et al., 2016). Using the job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001), Shaffer and colleagues (2012) present an overview of a range of demands including personal demands, work demands, and non-

work demands. While personal demands encompass aspects such as stress and coping and identity transformation, work demands consider careeer transition concerns and structural and perceptual barriers. Non-work demands relate mainly to work-family conflicts, friendships, and personal life. In a similar vein, Jooss et al. (2021b) discuss physical, psychological, and social demands that global workers face. These demands are a result of high physical mobility, cognitive flexibility, and non-work disruption (Shaffer et al., 2012), particularly for those global workers that engage in signficant global boundary spanning across a multiplicity of changing contexts. For example, IBTs and flexpatriates especially encounter such demands given their role which requires a signficant amount of travel and high level of flexibility, adapting to new environments. In addition, these global workers often have to manage both home and host country work responsibilities, leading to a signficant workload often beyond their formal job description. While it is known that many organisations do incorporate the need for global travel in job descriptions the granularity of what this means appears less often understood and to have a material impact on those undertaking these roles by way of support. The reality appears to be that the global dimension of positions where they involve more flexible forms of global working (e.g., flexpatriates) are treated almost solely as domestically based employees (Pate & Scullion, 2018). This may in part be due to often glamorised perspectives towards those that undertake extensive international travel, rather than adopting a more critical lens to the challenges and potentially detrimental aspects that this can bring.

Given the boundary spanning aspect to many of these positions, greater emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that these global workers remain motivated and are retained by organisations (Dimitrova, 2020). To achieve this, we argue that effective talent management approaches are needed to be put in place that accounts for the unique work context that global workers face, and which ultimately will influence the contribution made to the MNE. In this regard, we argue that current talent management processes do not fully capture either the value of global workers as boundary

spanners or the proliferating demands created through the nature of their work (Jooss et al., 2021a). Recent empirical work illustrates why such a lack of oversight and strategic management can be problematic (Jooss et al., 2021b). The authors found a substantial job demands-resources mismatch faced by global workers. Global workers have a high level of autonomy around how they carry out their global work which many individuals used to engage in job crafting actions. However, these job crafting actions inadvertently intensified rather than eased the demands-resources mismatch that these workers faced. Increasing demands without an appropriate support infrastructure will arguably lead to strain and hinder the effective performance of their boundary role, for example, in relation to knowledge sharing practices. We therefore call for greater oversight by corporate HR function to, in the first instance, critically assess what boundary spanning activities require physical mobility across borders versus potential to engage virtually. To maintain motivation and retain global workers, talent management practices must be cognisant of the demands that are involved when roles have significant global dimensions and direct appropriate resources to these workers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that the role of global workers, due to the boundary spanning role undertaken, represent individuals which can have disproportionate impact on the value added to the organisation. Moreover, we have argued that the inherent value of global workers in boundary spanning roles often appears under-utilised and under-appreciated within MNEs. For example, global workers may be central to the identification of new location investment decisions, collecting valuable contextualised information, developing social capital, accumulating and sharing knowledge, and so forth (Jooss et al., 2021a). This may in part be due to the overwhelming focus of global talent management on senior organisational leaders and/or traditional expatriates with others less-considered (Collings et al., 2019).

On an individual level, the chapter also highlights that much concern exists around the failure to identify and adequately address the significant demands of these workers (Jooss et al., 2021b) and how this can limit the value creation of these individuals despite potentially being in such pivotal positions (Morris, Snell, & Bjorkman, 2016). Connecting the *people and practices approach* to talent management with the *pivotal positions approach* to talent management, organisations need to ensure that global workers in pivotal positions are not only identified as individuals in such roles, but also provide the necessary framework to operate successfully. This requires reflection at various stages of the talent management process including recruiting, selecting, developing, engaging, and retaining these individuals as well as wider consideration of sustainable global work models. Beyond traditional expatriation, there appears to be too little consideration of global workers and the unique pressures and challenges they face in being able to realise the true value that those in such positions can confer on the organisation. Such approaches appear to be inconsistent with the commonly cited arguments about one of the greatest challenges that MNEs are dealing with being sufficiently strong global talent pipelines (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Cascio & Boudreau, 2016).

Moreover, the effective management of the individual global worker also needs to be extended to a wider organisational knowledge management level if value is to be realized. This is because the "strategic value of knowledge embedded in individual know-how, actions and collective experiences and expertise suggests that effectively managing the top performing knowledge workers is necessary for enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness" (Whelan & Carcary, 2011, p. 683). Global workers depending on their role remit have the ability to source internal (i.e. wider MNC) and external knowledge. Talent management can play a key mediating role in knowledge sourcing and the translation into better organisational performance (Chadee & Raman, 2012). However, cases where knowledge management and talent management are considered in a holistic way by organisations

appear more likely to be rare than common. However, this has been given little attention by researchers (notable exception being Chadee & Raman, 2012).

Given the issues that have been highlighted in this chapter, it is unsurprising that there is a lack of evidence behind firms managing their talent on a global scale effectively, as well as realizing the potential value from such key employees. Even where job descriptions recognise the key role of global working in positions, MNEs appear to fail to effectively recognise the importance of this dimension, how it can create value for the organisation, and how it presents considerable challenges to these employees (Jooss et al., 2021b). While differentiation lies at the heart of talent management (McDonnell & Wiblen, 2021), it appears that there are insufficient HR architectures in place to support and manage global workers which appropriately recognise the additional challenges and idiosyncrasies that exist in this context. Whether this is best addressed through a global talent management function or global mobility function, or where responsibility is incorporated within the corporate HR function, is open to question. More importantly, there is a need for explicit recognition and management of global workers and all the constituent elements of such roles to enable the maximum contribution be realised. Taking it further, there is a need to consider the architecture required to foster the possible value from knowledge that such global workers can source and transfer.

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